

Statement on Senate Action on the Proposed “Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002”

July 25, 2002

Today’s passage by Congress of corporate accounting reforms is a victory for America’s shareholders and employees. House and Senate passage of this legislation demonstrates what can happen when leaders work together to solve problems. I look forward to signing these important reforms into law. In February I also proposed tough changes to reform employee pension programs, and the House quickly responded. I urge the Senate to act before they recess to protect the savings of America’s workers.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 3763, the proposed “Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002.”

Remarks at a Dinner for Senatorial Candidate Elizabeth Dole in Greensboro, North Carolina

July 25, 2002

Well, thank you very much, Senator. [*Laughter*] I want to thank you all for coming. I’m here for this reason: It is important for North Carolina, it is important for our country that Elizabeth Dole become the next United States Senator from North Carolina. And I want to thank you all for helping. And there’s no doubt in my mind, with your help and her hard work, she’s going to win.

She married well. [*Laughter*] But Bob got the better end of the deal—[*laughter*]—just like I did when I married. [*Laughter*] I’m sorry that Laura isn’t here tonight. She is—but she sends her love to Elizabeth and her thanks to you all. I’m really proud of Laura. She is, in my unobjective judgment, a great First Lady, no question a great wife. She’s a great wife. She’s come a long way from being a public school librarian in Texas—[*laughter*]—one who, frankly, didn’t like politics too much and didn’t really care for politicians either. [*Laughter*] But here she is, the First Lady of the greatest country on the face of the Earth, and she’s doing a great job, and she sends her best.

I know you all will join me in wishing Jesse Helms all the best, and he needs to get back to Washington. We need his vote—[*laughter*]—and he will be. And I appreciate so very much Lauch Faircloth for being here and former Senator Jim Broyhill as well. Thank you both for coming, and thank you for your service.

I want to thank all the folks who are involved with the Republican Party of the great State of North Carolina. I want to thank Bill Cobey and Linda Shaw, and I want to thank all the grassroots workers who are here. You know, you win a campaign if you can get people to show up to lick the envelopes and to make the phone calls and to hold the signs and to turn out the vote. The grassroots are excited here in North Carolina because they’ve got a candidate who is an exciting candidate and somebody who is going to make a big difference. So I want to thank you all for what you’ve done and what you got to do between now and November. I want to thank Fred Blackman for being the master of ceremonies of this event. I want to thank all the sponsors and the cohosts and the people that have done an extraordinary job of supporting Elizabeth Dole. Thank you for having me.

She is a—she’s got a lot of great experience, and that matters in my judgment. You know, the thing I love about Elizabeth is she’s constantly breaking what they call the glass ceiling. She shows what is possible. And that’s important, particularly for a lot of young women looking for a role model, somebody who has done a—[*applause*]—a person of accomplishment. In Washington, we’ve got a lot of good talkers, but we need doers, people who can get the job done. And Elizabeth Dole is that kind of person.

She is not only a trailblazer; she is a—she’s got a deep, abiding passion for people from all walks of life. Her compassion is real, and it’s heartfelt. When Elizabeth goes walking down the streets of smalltown North Carolina, for example—and I understand she’s doing a lot of that—she doesn’t ask somebody when they shake their hand, “Are you a Republican? Are you a Democrat?” She looks them in the eye as a fellow American, wanting to represent all the people of this

good State in Washington, DC. No, the people in North Carolina, when you find a good one like Elizabeth, you need to send her up there to represent your State and your country. And I'm confident you will.

Elizabeth and I understand the importance of agriculture to North Carolina and America. I had the honor of speaking to some FFA leaders today in Washington before I came up here. I reminded them that agriculture is not only important for our economy; it's important for our national interest. Imagine if we didn't have enough food to eat; we'd be in a bind. And it's important to always keep agriculture in the forefront of economic policy. But it's also important to remember that on our farms and ranches, we find good old-fashioned American values.

I know the people here are hurting because of the drought. I tried to do my part today with some rain. *[Laughter]* But it wasn't enough, so this week Ann Veneman has approved a request for Federal drought relief. I approved it for 73 counties. It's emergency assistance to pay living expenses and production costs and help refinance debt for the hard-struggling farmers here in your State. We also opened up a—*[applause]*

That's the kind of Senator you want, somebody who is a practical person, who is able to deal with the problems that confront the people of this good State. And we talked about drought relief, and I assured her we were sincere in our attempts to help the farmers through this difficult period.

Today I also had the honor of going out to High Point to talk about an important issue, and that's health care. Elizabeth and I talked about that. She and I are on the same wavelength. We want people to have health care that is affordable, and we want people to have a good relationship with their doctor. And one of the problems we face all across America is that we've got too many lawsuits, too many people suing our docs and hospitals, too many junk lawsuits that are causing our doctors to have to practice what they call defensive medicine for fear of getting sued, which then runs the cost of health care up on the citizens.

People say, "Well is this a Federal issue?" Of course, it's a Federal issue. The frivolous lawsuits that are filed all across the country

cost the Federal Government over \$25 billion a year. That's \$25 billion of your dollars. See, we pay Medicare, and we pay Medicaid, and we pay for the veterans, and we pay for our military. And all these junk lawsuits are running up the cost of medicine, which hurts our patients. And so, therefore, it's time for the Federal Government to act.

Today I proposed Federal tort reform for medical malpractice, and I asked the Congress to join me. That's the kind of item I need Elizabeth's help on in Washington, DC. We've got a lot on our—we've got a lot on our plate up there. And it's going to be good to have a good, steady Senator there.

We need freedom for our taxpayers—real freedom. We passed a tax relief plan, but because the Senate has got arcane rules, the tax relief goes away at some point in time. And that's not right. In order to plan, we need the tax relief permanent. In order to get rid of the awful death tax, we need to make sure that it is repealed permanently. We need a voice in the Senate who understands that.

We need to make sure that we free Americans from dependency upon Government, so when we reauthorize welfare, we insist upon work, and we provide help to people so they can find work. We need a Medicare plan that is modern. You know, Medicare is a great idea, except that it's antiquated. It was made for another time. It's time to reform Medicare so seniors have got prescription drugs and more options from which they can choose. It is time the Federal Government trusts the American people.

You know else why I need Elizabeth Dole? I want my judges to get a fair hearing. I picked—I've nominated good people to serve on the bench, good, qualified, distinguished Americans, like Terry Boyle. I put his name out there 14 months ago, and he can't get a hearing. I nominated a fabulous woman from Texas named Priscilla Owen, a great jurist ranked at the highest rating by the ABA, ran twice statewide in Texas and won. And yet, when you listen to the rhetoric up there, it's all politics in Washington, DC. They're not willing to give these judges their fair shake and a fair due. It's time to get the Senate in the hands of people who will approve the good jurists I send, so we can have

a Federal bench that will not legislate—from which it will not be—will not legislate from but will strictly interpret the Constitution of the United States of America.

Our economy is getting stronger. The foundations for growth are there. Inflation's low; we've got good monetary policy, got good tax policy; the productivity of the American worker is up. And today, thankfully, the Senate and the House passed corporate legislation which will insist upon holding people accountable for being honest with the American people, honest about their assets, honest about their liabilities. And I want to assure you what took place yesterday will continue to take place. This administration will investigate, will arrest, and will prosecute chief executive officers who break the law.

Elizabeth knows what I know—is that this country is still in danger of attack. We're fighting an enemy who is incredibly ruthless. They don't value human life like we value human life. They hate freedom. They cannot stand the thought that in our great country, we worship an Almighty God freely, that we respect all religions in America, that we're not ashamed of our religious beliefs and our tolerance. They can't stand the thought that we have an open debate in our society. They don't like the free press. They don't like anything we stand for because we believe in freedom, and therefore, they still have designs on attacking America. And we will do everything we can to protect our homeland. It is, by far, the most important job I have.

We're making pretty good progress. A while ago I proposed the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. I want to tell you right quick why I did. There are over 100 agencies in Washington, DC, that have got some part of the—of protecting the homeland. They're scattered everywhere. They're all over the place. In order to make sure that the number one priority of the primary agencies involved with homeland security is the protection of the American people, they ought to be under one boss. We ought to put those agencies under one Cabinet position. It's important to do so for reasons of accountability, but it's also important to do so to make sure we change cultures in Washington, DC.

And we're making some progress. This is not a Republican idea, by the way, or a Democrat idea; this is an important idea for all of America. And as the Congress debates the issue, it is so important for them to give me the ability to manage this Department, so I can come before the American people and say, "We've got the tools necessary to protect the homeland."

You need to know that there is a lot of really fine Federal Government employees working a lot of hours to protect you; they really are. We can just do it a better way and a better job. We're running down every hint. We're running down every lead. If we get a sniff from something abroad, the information is now shared on a timely basis with our FBI, for example. And we're just—we're on full—full alert. We're chasing everything down. We're spending a lot of time on the subject.

But the best way to secure the homeland, the best way to defend our freedom, the best way to make sure America is as safe as possible is to hunt these killers down, one by one, and bring them to justice. And that is exactly what the United States and our friends are going to do.

It's a different kind of war. We're facing people who hide. You know, they don't have armies and tanks and equipment. It doesn't take much for them to strike. They—as I like to tell people, these are the ones that hide in a cave and send youngsters to their death. They hijack a great religion and then tell kids to go kill themselves. That's the way they are. And they're still out there. A lot of them were trained in these Al Qaida camps. But we're making good progress. You just need to know, we've got over a couple of thousand of them captured. And just about that many weren't quite as lucky.

And it's not just us. We've put together a vast coalition of countries that understand the stakes; they understand that this is a defining moment in the 21st century. The doctrine that says, if you harbor a terrorist, feed a terrorist, or hide a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists—it still holds. And so does the doctrine, either you're with the United States and those of us who love freedom, or you're not with the United States and those of us who love freedom.

Our first action was to rout the Taliban. They harbored terrorists; they fed terrorists; and they were treated just like the terrorists. And thanks to the mighty United States military, we routed the Taliban.

I want the youngsters here to understand that your country did not go into Afghanistan as conquerors. We went in as liberators, and we freed people from the clutches of one of the most barbaric regimes in the history of mankind. For the first time, thanks to the United States and our friends and allies, young girls get to go to school in Afghanistan. We're working with the interim—with the Government of Chairman Karzai. We're helping to feed the people. We're helping to provide infrastructure. We're doing everything we can to enable this country, this war-ravaged country, to develop into a hopeful place.

But in the meantime, there are still Al Qaida people in the country. And so you'll see—sometimes you'll see and sometimes you won't see the fact that our military is still hunting them down. When we figure out they are somewhere, that's where we're going to be. One time, they tried to group up in the Shahi-Kot Mountains. That's the last time they made that decision. *[Laughter]*

The other thing we're doing is we're denying them sanctuary. See, once you get them on the run, then they're looking for safe haven. So our strategy is to remind other nations that we don't want them to have safe haven. The other day, the Philippine Government went after this group called Abu Sayyaf* and got their leader. This was the group of people that killed Mr. Burnham out of Kansas. I met his—by the way, I met his wife in the Oval Office, Gracia Burnham. You talk about a fabulous woman, who believes deeply in the Lord. Her heart is right. She is strong. She told me—she said, "Mr. President, I appreciate the fact that you and the Government, and the Government of the Philippines did everything you can to rescue us." I told her, I said, "You just need to know, because of our working with the Philippine Government, there's one less terrorist available to kill somebody."

* White House correction.

We're making progress. We're making it clear that if you try to provide sanctuary for these people, you'll be dealing with the United States of America. This is a pledge I have made not only to those who have lost life on September the 11th and others, but it's a pledge I make to our children and grandchildren. We owe it to future generations to be tough and resolved and dedicated to protecting our freedom, no matter what the cost.

And that means dealing with nations which harbor and develop weapons of mass destruction. We must not, for the sake of the future, and we cannot allow the world's worst leaders to threaten America or our friends and allies with the world's worst weapons. I'm a patient man. I intend to use all the tools at our disposal. But for the sake of freedom, for the sake of what's right, for the sake of a—for the sake of history, we're not going to let the world's worst leaders threaten America with the world's worst weapons.

I'm incredibly proud of our country. It's a great country, because we're great people. You know, I just cannot imagine what the killers were thinking. They were sitting around in some cave, probably, saying, "You know, if we attack them, they won't do anything. You know, they may file a lawsuit." *[Laughter]* "They'll just sit back. They're so materialistic and so self-absorbed and so self-ish, they're not—they're not going to defend anything."

What they didn't realize is they were attacking a great nation. What they didn't realize is that we're people who will defend our freedom at all costs. But as importantly, out of the evil done to America is going to come some incredible good. I believe that when our country—*[applause]*—I believe that as we remain tough and resolved and lead a coalition that understands the true threats we face in the 21st century, we can achieve peace.

And my goal is peace. I want there to be peace in the world. I know there are going to be some tough moments. There are going to be some high hurdles to cross. But my vision is one that says the world can be peaceful. I believe that. And I believe by routing out the terrorists, we can achieve peace. We can achieve peace for our country; we can

achieve peace for our friends and allies; we can achieve peace in places like the Middle East or in South Asia as well.

And at home, we can accomplish a lot. See, out of the evil done to America is coming good, because people are taking an assessment of what's important in life. They've stepped back after September the 11th and taken kind of an assessment of their personal balance sheet, and realize it's not just dollars and cents, that life is not just money, that in order to be a complete person, life is serving something greater than yourself. And that's what's happening in America.

That's why I feel so strongly that we must have what I call a Faith-Based Initiative. Because I understand in America, in spite of our wealth, there are pockets of despair and hopelessness, addiction and loneliness, but these are Americans we're talking about. In our country, when one hurts, all of us have got to hurt in America, as far as I'm concerned. And therefore, the good that can come out of the evil will be when Americans put their arm around somebody in need and say, "I love you, brother," or when they mentor a child, or when moms and dads renew their effort to be as great a parent as they can possibly be. You see, if you're lucky enough to be a mom or a dad, your most important job is to love your child with all your heart and all your soul.

It's happening in America, all across this land. People from all political parties, from all walks of life, are saying, "What can I do to make America a better place? How can I serve something greater than myself in life?"

One of the reasons I first got into politics is because I was worried about a culture which had clearly said, "If it feels good, go ahead and do it, and if you've got a problem, blame somebody else." I wanted to help be a part of a change of a culture which says, "We're all responsible for the decisions we make in life, that we all have responsibilities, that serving something greater than yourself is a part of being an American."

Perhaps that lesson came home most vividly to me, and I'm sure to you, about what took place on Flight 93. I happen to think it's a defining moment for the culture of our country. People flying across this country re-

alized that a plane was going to be used as a weapon, perhaps a weapon on the White House or on the Capitol. They were on their cell phones with their loved ones; they said, "I love you." They said a prayer. One guy said, "Let's roll," and they took the plane in the ground, to serve something greater than themselves.

This country—out of the evil done to this country is coming incredible good, an understanding that to be an American means to love your neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. When the enemy hit us, they didn't know who they were hitting. They hit the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

It's my honor to be here with you tonight. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. in the Grandville Ballroom at the Grandover Resort and Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to former Senators Bob Dole and Lauch Faircloth; Bill Cobey, chairman, and Linda O. Shaw, national committeewoman, North Carolina Republican Party; and President Hamid Karzai of the Transitional Authority of Afghanistan.

Remarks on Proposed Legislation To Establish the Department of Homeland Security

July 26, 2002

The President. Thank you all for coming. Welcome to the White House. Good morning.

Audience members. Good morning.

The President. I appreciate so very much being joined here by firefighters and police officers and emergency personnel, public officials at the local level, the State level—I know we've got some Governors here. And I want to thank you all for coming.

We're on the cusp of doing something right for America. And I appreciate the members of my Cabinet who are here. I want to thank the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Transportation, the head of the Office of National Drug Policy. I appreciate Kay James being here. I want to thank Tom Ridge for his hard work.

But most importantly, I want to thank the Members of Congress who got up pretty early after not much sleep—[laughter]—for